Daniel Boorstin on Getty and Liz

Harry Caudill on the American dream

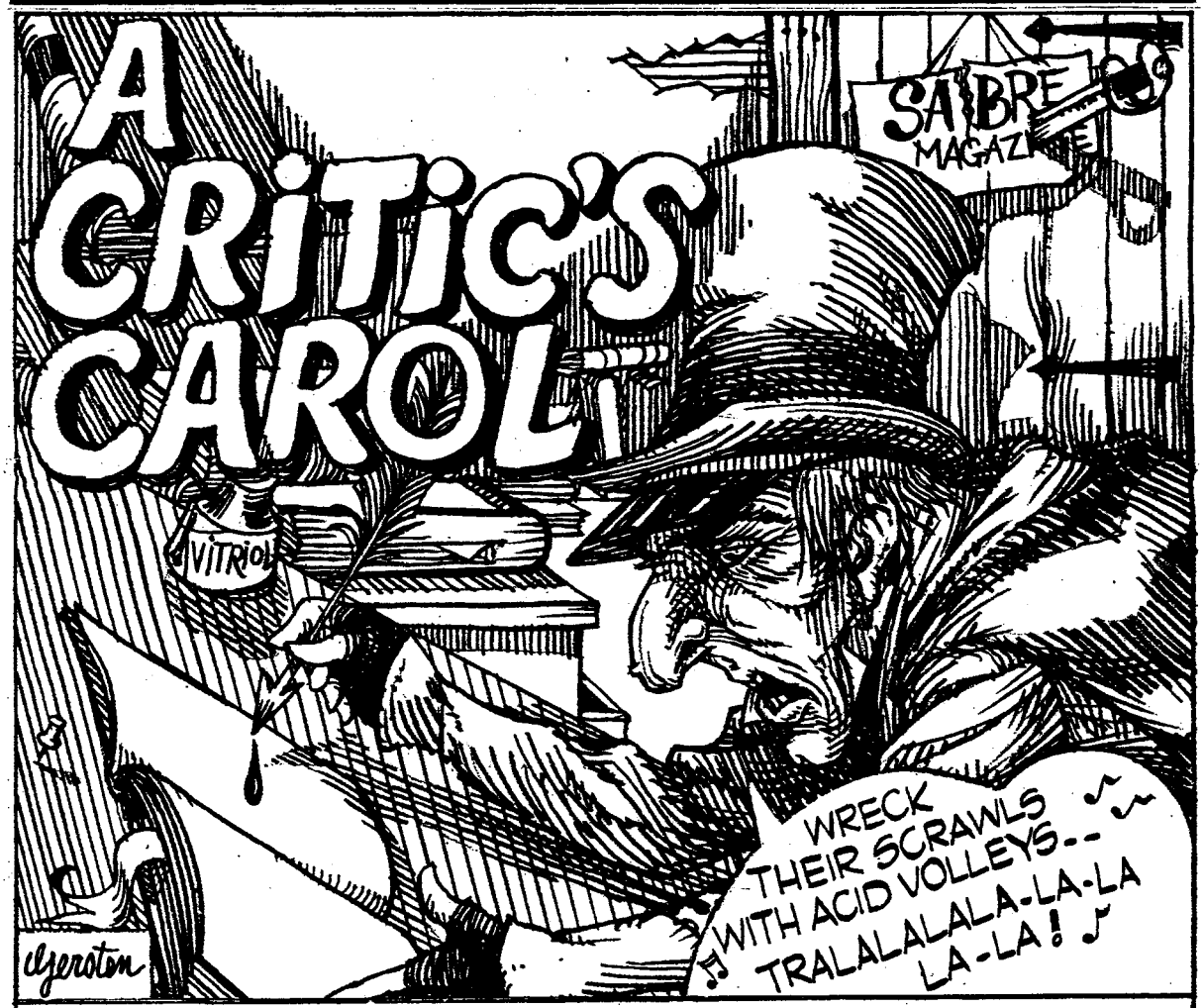
Robert Jastrow on 'Science: U. S. A.'

BOOK WEEK

CHRISTMAS ISSUE

DECEMBER 3, 1967

The Washington Post



OLD EVERSHARPE SCOURGE, WORLD'S MEANEST CRITIC, SITS IN HIS CHILLY OFFICE AND PUTS THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON HIS MONTHLY COLUMN DISSECTING THE NEW BOOKS... IT IS CHRISTMAS EVE AND IN THE COURTYARD BELOW, THE P.E.N. CLUB CAROLERS ARE SINGING. SCOURGE JOINS IN...

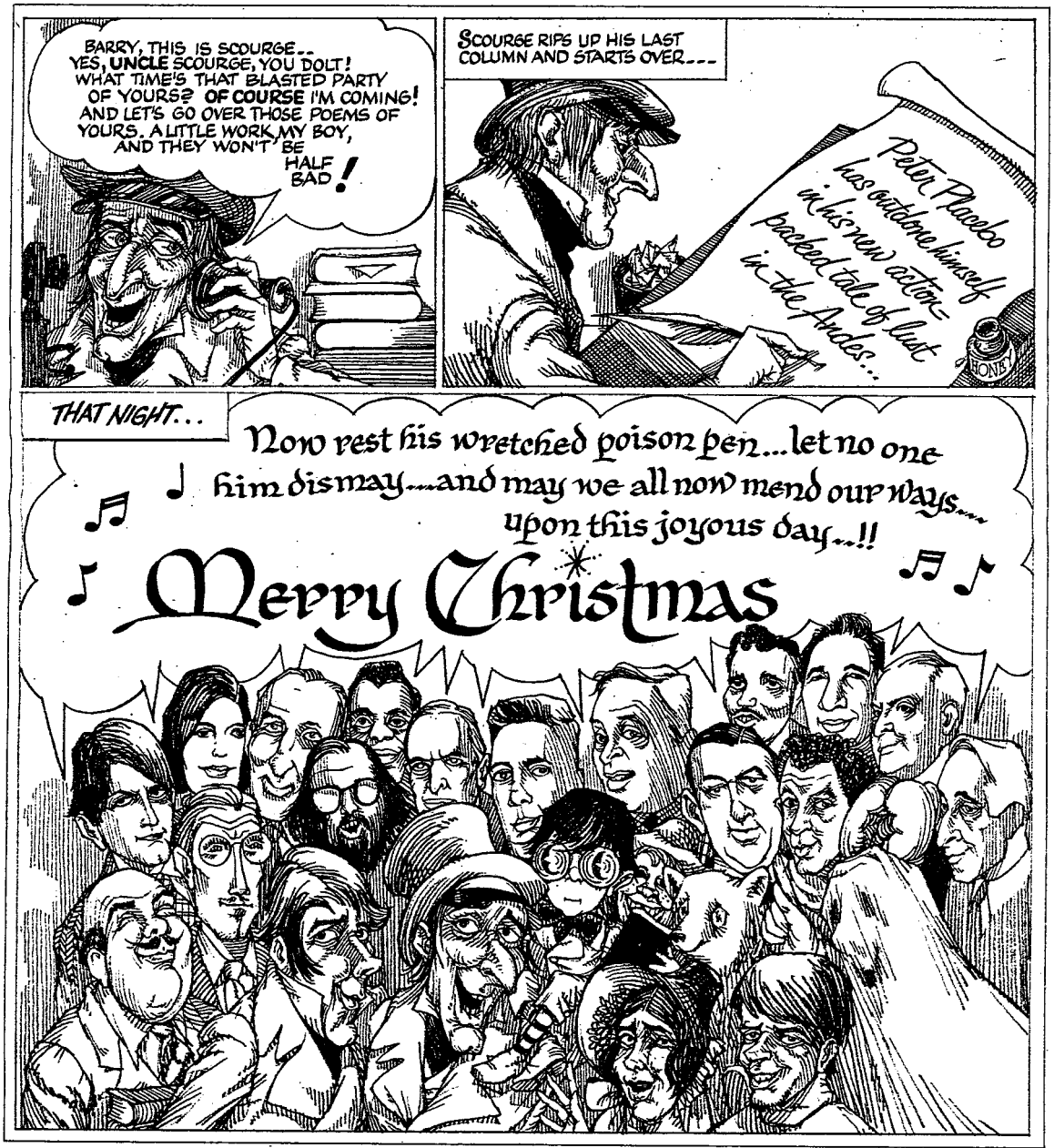
A CRITIC'S CAROL

ASSANT EDITOR
BOB SCRATCHIT, DON'T GO MUCKING AROUND WITH MY SEMICOLONS! NONE OF YOU YOUNG NINCOMPOOPS KNOWS A SEMICOLON FROM AN ASPIDISTRA!
RIOT
CRAZY CHRISTMAS, UNC! LET'S CUT OUT AND HOIST A FEW AT THE WHITE HORSE-- FUEL FOR THE YULE!
SCOURGE'S NEPHEW, BARRY BLATHER, ARRIVES---
CHRISTMAS (BAH!) A PSEUDO-EVENT! BESIDES, WHAT'RE YOU SO MERRY ABOUT, YOU NO-TALENT NE'ER-DO-WELL!
YOU READ MY POEMS, HUH, UNC?
YES, AND BELIEVE ME, MY PET ANTEATER COULD DO BETTER!
FORGET IT, BABY. THE BIG THING IS LIKE, YOU SHOULD MAKE THE SCENE AT MY PAD TOMORROW NIGHT. EVERY SWINGER IN TOWN'S GONNA SHOW--GINSBERG'S GONNA DO JINGLE BELLS IN SWAHILI--
OUT OF THE QUESTION, MY BOY! GO YOUR ERRANT WAY WITHOUT ME!
SCOURGE DROPS A DOZEN LARGE GIFT BOOKS ON THE CAROLERS OUTSIDE, AND TELLS SCRATCHIT "SEE THAT YOU BLOW OUT YOUR CANDLE WHEN YOU LEAVE, BOY" THEN TRUDGES HOME TO HIS MELANCHOLY SUITE OF ROOMS...
SEVERAL HOURS LATER, SCRATCHIT COMES HOME FROM WORK---
COME DOWN FROM THERE, TEENIE WEENIE --YOU'LL RUIN YOUR EYES!
TO THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS! AND OUR BENEFACTOR, EVERSHARPE SCOURGE WHO MAKES EVEN THIS HUMBLE FARE POSSIBLE!
NO! AND STOP BEING A SCHNOOK, BOB. HE'S A TERRIBLE OLD MAN. YOU PUT ALL HIS ARTICLES INTO ENGLISH AND HE'S NEVER GIVEN YOU A BY-LINE! NOT ENOUGH SALARY EVEN TO FIX TEENIE'S GLASSES!
BLESS US EVERYONE... EXCEPT MR. SCOURGE, WHO'S A FINK!
SCOURGE FEEDS HIS PET ANTEATER SOME FRESH PAPERBACKS, READS HIS FAVORITE POEM "ODE ON MELANCHOLY," AND BLOWS OUT THE LIGHT. SUDDENLY THERE IS A CLANKING NOISE IN THE CELLAR, AS IF SOMEONE WERE DRAGGING A CHAIN. IT GROWS LOUDER AND LOUDER! THEN A FEARSOME APPARITION APPEARS--
WHAT TH- WHO-O-O ARE YOU, CURSED INTRUDER?
I AM GUTENBERG'S GHOST! YOU HAVE ABUSED THE SANCTIFIED FRANCHISE OF THE PRINTED WORD! UNLESS YOU MEND YOUR WAYS IN THE TIME REMAINING THESE CHAINS YOU SHALL WEAR FOREVER IN THE HEREAFTER!

LET US REVIEW YOUR PAST TENSE...
POOH ON POOH!
ROMANTIC RUBBISH!
UNFATHOMABLE PHONEY!
POOH
SAWYER
JOYCE
BOURGEOIS BILGEWATER
UNREPENTANT OVER HIS PAST EXCESSES, SCOURGE TOURS THE CURRENT LITERARY SCENE, HE CANNOT RESTRAIN HIS VENOM!
DON'T LOSE YOUR COOL, BABY!
NORMAN 'THE KID' MAILER
ABSURD EXHIBITIONIST!
O'HARA...PANDERER TO FALSE IDOLS!
SAY, WHO'S YOUR HABERDASHER, FELLA?
GOLF WATCH
ROBERT LOWELL - ANARCHISTIC POETASTER!
BAN THE BOMB
FOSSILIZED WORDMONGER!
TRY MY HEADSHRINKER, PAL!
BELLOW
HERZOG LIVES
PRETENTIOUS PARANOIA!
PARAJOURNALISTIC POPCORN!
TOM WOLFE

A CRITIC'S CAROL

THE PRESENT CONT...
OB-SCURANT CAMPERS!
HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE!
LIBID-INOUS LOUTS!
WHO'S THE CAT IN THE SHADE JIMBO?
I BELONG UP THERE... NOT THESE PLATITUD-INOUS PYGMIES!
WILSON
KAZIN
TRILLING
BALDWIN
FIEDLER
SONTAG
LET US SEE WHAT POSTERITY HOLDS IN STORE FOR YOU---
BARRY BLATHER JR., SCOURGE'S GRAND-NEPHEW, RUMMAGES THRU A TRUNK OF OLD BOOK REVIEWS---
BARQUE
NORMAN NUDGE SAYS:
so it is apparent from this final collection of frail, inept and misanthropic essays that Ever-sharpe Scourge dissipated his usefulness as a literary critic before he ever began...
I'D LIKE EVERY-THING YOU HAVE IN STOCK BY EVER-SHARPE SCOURGE!
SCOURGE? NEVER HEARD OF 'IM!
SCOURGE HURRIES TO THE PUBLIC LIBRARY, CHECKS THE CARD FILE AND FINDS ONLY ONE OF HIS BOOKS LISTED -----
THEY HURRY TO THE SHELF TAKE IT DOWN AMID A CLOUD OF DUST AND ---
OH, NO! (SOB) NOBODY'S EVER TAKEN IT OUT!
AND LOOK
--AND THE PAGES (GROAN) ARE UNCUT!
NEXT DAY, XMAS --
SORRY TO BE SO LATE SIR, WE WERE UP TILL ALL HOURS OPENING GIFTS UNDER OUR LITTLE TREE--
WELL, I WON'T STAND FOR IT ANY MORE! THEREFORE SCRATCHIT--I AM RAISING YOUR SALARY TO $45-A WEEK! AND THAT CONFOUNDED COLUMN OF MINE. IT'S YOURS FROM NOW ON!!


BARRY, THIS IS SCOURGE...
YES, UNCLE SCOURGE, YOU DOLT! WHAT TIME'S THAT BLASTED PARTY OF YOURS? OF COURSE I'M COMING! AND LET'S GO OVER THOSE POEMS OF YOURS. A LITTLE WORK, MY BOY, AND THEY WON'T BE HALF BAD!
SCOURGE RIPS UP HIS LAST COLUMN AND STARTS OVER...
Peter Placebo has outdone himself in his new action-packed tale of lust in the Andes...
THAT NIGHT...
Now rest his wretched poison pen... let no one him dismay... and may we all now mend our ways... upon this joyous day...!!
Merry Christmas